

Reviewing The New Books

By Mary-Carter Roberts

The Secret History of the War—(Two Volumes)

By Waverley Root. (Scribners; \$10.)

A book which is called a "secret history" usually presents a definite body of facts not previously available to the public. And it usually names the sources from which its author learned those facts. This book does neither. The great part of the material which Waverley Root brings forward as "secret" news concerning the war is simply incidental. It is rather a history of the course of events and the sort of background material which every newspaperman accumulates in the course of his work. Nor does Mr. Root, when he launches on such a "secret" report, usually tell where he got his information. He commonly names his sources as his "informants" and lets it go at that.

Just the same, he has written a sensational book. His own outspoken interpretations of events and conditions makes it so.

The two volumes, which add up to 1,200 pages, treat of the war up to the assassination of Admiral Darlan and the appointment of Gen. Giraud to take his place as high commissioner of French North Africa. They are not a military history. They are, rather, a history of the conflict between democracy and fascism as it has been fought out on the various fronts.

We Have Fascism, Too.

Under the head "The War in Asia," for instance, we find chiefly a discussion of the diplomatic considerations which induced Japan to enter the war. The fall of the Philippines is barely mentioned, and the battle of the Solomons is briefly referred to as a "diversion." Taking it for granted that everybody knows about those events by now, Mr. Root occupies himself with examining the policies of the governments involved, the war included. He arrives at the conclusion that Fascism is not a germ which infects the enemy alone. We have it, too, he says, and in a serious measure.

Unlike other writers who have undertaken exposes of the same sort, however, he does not isolate the term in the various groups which consciously aim at propagating Fascist ideas. His charge is that the plague spot is in our own Government, most particularly in the State Department.

The Fate of France.

The great drama of the war, as he sees it, has been around the fate of France. There Fascism caused the betrayal of a major power and there, sheltered by the betrayers, it survived to spread its poison into the ranks of the democratic Allies.

The major part of the "Secret History" Volume I is given over to a study of how France was sold out to her enemies. For this Mr. Root holds Gen. Giraud and the Vichy government responsible and his statement of his stand is couched in exhorting terms.

Diplomatic "Fall Guys."

He considers the department utterly out of touch with democracy. Its staff is made up, he says, of young men with nice manners and fear of people whose manners perhaps are not quite so nice. They are natural "fall guys" for diplomatic confidence men, in his view. As for the President, the book rates his course as inexplicable for the head of a democratic state. He has sunk so low as to flatter Spain's Franco, observes Mr. Root, and he wrote cajoling letters to Vichy's Petain, he says. He embarrassed Churchill and kept alive the memory of appeasement in Stalin. To support these charges Mr. Root quotes facts and documents and if they are not, as his title suggests, exactly "secret," they have not been gathered together and interpreted in quite this way before.

The Darlan-Giraud Deal.

In describing the Darlan-Giraud deal, Mr. Root builds up a circumstantial case to the effect that the Germans themselves let the general get out of Koenigstein prison and handed him over to collaborators who were to sell him to the Americans, thus getting their own man in and keeping De Gaulle out. Before our front cover arrived, he says, Vichy men in numbers shifted their capital to Africa to profit by the stabilization of the franc which followed the invasion. They tripled their fortunes on the transaction, he estimates. Our statesmen, he says, were suckers for about anything they told them.

The section of Volume I which treats of France's fall is not so sensational. The charge which it makes of a Fascist conspiracy involving Frenchmen high in the army, in finance and politics is old stuff by now, but the book goes the full distance in offering the author's opinion.



"... The accord seems to be too sweet." Beardsley Ruml (father of the "pay-as-you-go" taxation) and, at right, Stuart Chase, economist and author, of whom the two are "in perfect agreement—in principle."

Democracy Under Pressure

By Stuart Chase. (Twentieth Century Fund; \$1.)

Tomorrow's Business

By Beardsley Ruml. (Farrar & Rinehart; \$2.50.)

It may be a matter of surprise to many readers to find Stuart Chase and Beardsley Ruml standing on the same economic ground, but here they are, the left wing and the right peacefully joined.

Mr. Ruml is conspicuous in the kind of business known as big. He is treasurer of R. H. Macy & Co. he is a member of the research committee of the Committee for Economic Development, he is chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Mr. Chase is in even less need of introduction. He has long been the fair-haired boy of radical economic thinking. In his current book, moreover, he shoots some irreverent arrows in Mr. Ruml's direction, marked with Mr. Ruml's name. But when the two gentlemen sum up one finds them in sweet accord.

The only catch is that the accord seems to be too sweet. It is not set on financial ground but idealistic, where it is safe for any opponents to get together. The harmony is like that which obtains between diplomats when they announce to the world that they are in perfect agreement—in principle.

For the Common Good.

Mr. Chase naturally begins his book with an assault. He is a born literary storm trooper. He charges in on three "Big" pressure groups which, he declares, are threatening our democracy by their selfish lobbying—big business, big labor and big agriculture. In one of those sustained pyrotechnic outbursts of which he is so dazzling a master he exposes the sins of all three which, in his view, add up to an ignoring of the interests of the consumer whom all are supposed to serve and a cynical misuse of the legislative power.

Then, for a moment, gloom seems to engulf his optimism. He says that he suggests that the only remedy is big Government. But he comes out radiant from under the cloud and spreads an entrancing rainbow over the final passages of his book. Let us have a great moral reawakening, he urges. Let us lay aside our selfish interests and work for the common good. Nobody in the world could say a word against that.

Mr. Ruml is not anywhere near as amusing. He just plods along. As he is writing down, trying to explain business to the non-business reader, he sticks to words of few syllables and a sort of primerlike simplicity. For the main part of his book his title is misleading. He is not discussing the possible shape of business to come, but explaining how business works. He tells us how it works in the basic sense in any society and then he tells us how it works in the particular sense in our own.

A Private Government.

Business, he says, is, like the family and the church, a sort of private government. As it exists in our own country today, its control theoretically lies in the hands of stockholders, with the ultimate power vested in the consumer, while theoretically again—employees are free agents who can change their jobs when they do not like their working conditions.

Neither theory, however, is effective in practice, Mr. Ruml observes with placid justice. Stockholders and consumers really have very

little to say and employees in actuality are frequently tied to their jobs. So what to do? Like Mr. Chase, Mr. Ruml concludes that there will have to be a better spirit in the future.

His view is that the coming age will be one in which fresh emphasis is put on individual freedom—and individual responsibility. His own emphasis is on the latter. The citizen—stockholders, consumers and job holders—will have to give up their practice of merely resting on the will of the governing powers and take their share of the power—for which, and, he too observes, they will need a moral awakening. Business will have to readjust itself but the people will have to exert the power. The private government of business, in Mr. Ruml's summing up, is like the public government in this respect—it exists by the consent of the governed, and if the government lies down on the job nobody except themselves can be blamed for the consequences.

So we find the tycoon and the radical agreeing that it is all our fault. It is nice to know so exactly where the blame belongs.

Unleash the Dogs of War

By Frederick P. Steff. (Robert McBride & Co.; \$2.50.)

Reviewed by RUTH DEAN.

Among the marine casualties recently reported was worded Bunkie—dead from combat exhaustion. The little German shepherd who was almost too small to measure up to

the physical standards of the war dog reception and training center at Front Royal, Va., proved himself a hero on Guam, when his growl put the marines on the alert in time to discover a 10-man Jap patrol that had sneaked through the lines. The marines did the rest of the work. Exploits like this inspired Frederick

Steff to write his book—"Unleash the Dogs of War."

The book is just that—it is the story of dogs at war. How it is possible to turn household pets into savage and efficient dogs of war, and harder yet, convert them back again, after honorable discharge, to peaceful canine citizens is clearly told. Simply, and with a sympathetic understanding of dogs, Mr. Steff explains how the dogs are introduced to their handlers with whom they will become an inseparable part during their stay in the Army. Herein lies the secret of war dog control, the saving of lives through attack or administering aid, but needs the orders and the timing that the handler gives him. In many ways the training of GI Fido is not unlike the "boot" training GI Joe is subjected to, for it includes obstacle courses, mock enemy attacks and drill orders under fire.

Four-Footed Fighters.

To make all this clear, Mr. Steff has written an exciting story of two imaginary four-footed fighters, Murky and Cecil, recruited from private life to fight with as much bravery and to bring as much credit to the Army as the soldiers with whom they helped rout Gen. Arnhem's forces in the North African campaign.

Mr. Steff writes of dogs without sentimentalizing. Such descriptions as the dogs' saving the handlers after a convoy ship sinking, attack dogs flying with bared fangs at the throat of the enemy and casualty dogs, miraculously finding those given up for lost, are unforgettable scenes of the book, etched in a simple descriptive style that strikingly emphasizes their reality.

Public Library Book Pointers

CLASSICS OF THE WESTERN WORLD.

Elizabeth S. Duvall,

Information Dept., Washington Public Library.

All education does not come from books, but surely much pleasure and satisfaction are gained from reading whether it is done with a serious purpose or for enjoyment alone.

Many adults, no longer able or willing to study formally in the classroom, but with time and inclination to read the books they've missed, need help in selecting and planning just what they most want.

"Classics of the Western World" is a well-planned bibliography, edited by members of the faculty of Columbia College, which lists chronologically great books from Homer to the 20th century and contains excellent notes on editions, translations and related readings under each section of works by a particular author. The curious reader will find in the list a tantalizing taste of what he might have in abundance for the asking.

This Week's New Books

The Missouri, \$2.50, Jan. 25. Once in Vienna, \$2.50, Jan. 23. The Public Debt, \$1.75, Jan. 24. The Vigil of a Nation, \$2.75, Jan. 25. A Preface to Berlin, \$2.50, Jan. 26. Re-Educating Germany, \$2.50, Jan. 24. Under a Gothic Sky, \$1.75. Net of Coleridge, \$2, Jan. 26. Assignment Without Glory, \$2.

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Best Sellers in Washington

FICTION.

The Green Years, by A. J. Cronin.

Forever Amber, by Kathleen Winsor.

Green Dolphin Street, by Elizabeth Goudge.

Earth and High Heaven, by Gwethalyn Graham.

Immortal Wife, by Irving Stone.

NONFICTION.

The Time for Decision, by Sumner Welles.

The World of Washington Irving, by Van Wyck Brooks.

Guide to the Peace, edited by Sumner Welles.

Story of a Secret State, by Jan Karski.

Anything Can Happen, by George and Helen Papashvily.

This list is based on actual sales in local bookstores during the past week and is not to be considered an indication of popularity. Books highly in demand are frequently reported "out of stock" due to limited supplies. Records are not kept of verbal requests.

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I'll Hate Myself in the Morning and Summer in December

By Elliot Paul. (Random House; \$2.50.)

Reviewed by CHARLES M. EGAN.

This double feature—billed on the jacket as "two complete murder novels in one volume"—will add nothing to the literary reputation which "The Last Time I Saw Paris" achieved for Elliot Paul.

As a matter of fact, it's fortunate that the book sells for \$2.50. Widely circulated at two bits a copy, it might not only ruin Mr. Paul's reputation, but could easily do to mystery stories what something did to vaudeville not so many years ago. "I'll Hate Myself in the Morning," as its title might indicate, is the more atrocious. Obviously, Mr. Paul is trying to satirize whodunits, but all he accomplishes is something that is neither fish nor fowl. The veneer of cleverness is too thin—even more so than what might be called the plot.

This is another tale about the doings of Homer Evans, featured earlier in such epics as "The Mysterious Mickey Finn," "Mayhem in B-Flat," "Pracas in the Foothills" and "Hugger-Mugger in the Louvre." It starts with a murder aboard a Union Pacific streamliner just out of Las Vegas, and goes on from there. There isn't a natural, interesting character in the whole synthetic business, and any normal reader will have a hard time figuring out who is being kidded.

"Summer in December" is a little better. Mr. Paul, who did so well in borrowing his "The Last Time I Saw Paris" title from Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, might improve this spy story by having the famous song team set it to music.

The story deals with the Nazis' infiltration in Chile in 1938, and features, along with his spies and counterespies, a group of flamenco dancers, including Corralito, a miniature Carmen. Hero of the piece is one Brett Rutledge, who has all the virtues, but little else to keep a reader from nodding.

Much of the book sounds like a travelogue, and one can't help being a little dubious about the author in that score. Undoubtedly Mr. Paul knows Paris, and he might know Chile. But he can't know much about America's second city when he puts the finger on a Pullman porter in "I'll Hate Myself in the Morning" and fixes his place of origin as "East Side Chicago." What about Lake Michigan?

Still, maybe the author is just kidding again. That's the trouble with this volume, one never knows.

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By William B. Ziff

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In his book about people and painters of Flanders in the 15th century, Baron Joseph van der Elst makes various comparisons. These illustrations, taken from the book, compare the Flemish with American primitives. Left, "Just Judge," by Jan van Eyck, and "George Washington," by Kemmelmeyer.

The Last Flowering of the Middle Ages—People and Painters of Flanders

By Baron Joseph van der Elst. (Doubleday, Doren & Co., Inc.; \$7.50.)

Reviewed by FLORENCE S. BERRYMAN.

Any likeness between our own age and the 15th century is difficult for most of us to discern. Yet Baron van der Elst in his introduction to this engrossing study of Flanders five centuries ago considers the similarity amazing and gives reasons for his contention.

He is a diplomat by profession and is Counselor of the Embassy of Belgium. He is also an authority and noted lecturer on the art of his country.

Although presented as an art book, this is a work of larger dimensions. Nearly half of it deals with the history of the freedom-loving Flemish people, their social life, rulers, pageantry; with the good black earth in which their democratic civilization had its roots; with the rise of the towns and their industrial prosperity; with the medieval guilds, which many of us assume were similar to our present-day labor unions but which had marked differences; with love and the importance of women; and with religion.

Outstanding painters of the period are considered in the second half of the volume. Baron van der Elst does not attempt to deal at length with all Flemish masters but introduces lesser artists in connection with the leaders. Their work is illustrated in more than 100 half-tone plates, 16 of which are in color. These appear to be remarkably faithful reproductions, and the majority are full page.

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Can you spare 10 hours to save 30 million lives including your own?

YOU CAN read this book in about ten hours. Can you spare that much time to prevent the death of your son or grandson a few years from today? Have you the time to save thirty million lives, including your own? That is what another world war would cost in lives alone.

This is a big book because it deals with a big subject—but every word in it has the impact and urgency of a telegram. It is an eleven-hour appeal to sanity and action. You will be shocked and shaken by parts of it. It takes you behind the wall of secrecy which hides the ideas that prompt the actions of the gentlemen who talk of peace. You will watch, fascinated, as the author reveals the secret and overt hatreds, ideologies, traditions, cultures and ambitions of the warring and victimized nations. And you will begin to see—what has never before been made so clear—where each one of these nations stands at this crucial moment in history... and, more important, where each plans to go.

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The author's solution to the world's dilemma is drastic and controversial. But the facts he presents cry out for swift and violent action. Those who have read Mr. Ziff's previous best-seller *The Coming Battle of Germany* know that he writes beautifully, with power and passion... documenting his findings with devastating precision. *The Gentlemen Talk of Peace* is his best and most important book. 530 pages, indexed, \$3.

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William B. Ziff

William Bernard Ziff is a distinguished military historian and authority on international affairs, whose views are highly regarded in official Washington. He is the author of *THE COMING BATTLE OF GERMANY*, an outstanding best-seller of 1942.



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by STUART CHASE

Author of *Where's the Money Coming From?*

When the war ends, will peace come? Mr. Chase says no—not so long as 100 odd pressure groups with their Washington lobbies continue to put their selfish interests above the public interest. Mr. Chase points out legitimate needs for group representation in our democracy, but paints a scaring picture of danger from the unrestrained selfishness of warring special interests. A vivid, timely report for every American to read and ponder as a new Congress convenes.

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